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## VII.

# RECENT WORKS ON ANCIENT HISTORY AND PHILOLOGY.

Pezzi's Aryan Philology.  
Pictet's Origines Indo-Européennes.  
Hearn's Aryan Household.  
Keary's Dawn of History.  
Duncker's History of Antiquity.

THE immense increase of scientific knowledge brought about during the present century by the systematic employment of the comparative method has been nowhere more strikingly exemplified than in the study of philology. And I do not know where one could obtain a more just and accurate notion of the results which have been obtained in this study during the last twenty years than by reading M. Pezzi's erudite and lucid summary of these results.\* True, M. Pezzi's book is hardly intended for the "general reader." It would be quite unintelligible to a reader not already extensively and deeply versed in philological studies. Its object is not to popularize the science of language, but to sum up the work of the present generation of scholars in as concise, coherent, and impartial a statement as it is possible to make. And it realizes this object to quite a remarkable degree. The author's skill in shaping and controlling his vast wealth of material is very noteworthy and merits the highest praise. Seldom has so much food for thought been got into a compass of two hundred pages. The cautious and judicial temper shown throughout is no less admirable. M. Pezzi is always historical and nowhere dogmatic. He states the problems clearly, and expounds the various solutions that have been offered, with a spirit that is warmly appreciative even when most keenly critical ;

\* Aryan Philology according to the Most Recent Researches. Remarks Historical and Critical. By Domenico Pezzi. Translated by E. S. Roberts, M. A. London: Trübner & Co., 1879. Small 8vo, pp. 199.

and here he leaves the case, without inviting us to adopt any particular conclusion. In the case of such abstruse and delicate inquiries as those with which modern Aryan philology occupies itself, a work conceived and executed in this spirit can not fail to be useful. The wish so modestly expressed by the author, that his work might form a worthy supplement to the "Compendium" of Schleicher and the "Geschichte" of Benfey, has been, I think, more than realized.

On turning over the pages of this little book, the reader, who should come to it abruptly from the philological studies of a generation ago, would first be struck with the multitude of new names—such as Jolly, Schmidt, Ludwig, Heymann, Lottner, Fick, and especially Ascoli—while the venerated names of Bopp and Grimm appear but rarely. This is not because the work of these great scholars is becoming superseded, but because their main results are no longer matter of question, but have become part of the very bone and marrow of that most modern scholarship which is occupying itself with still more minute and profound researches. Since Schleicher, the great work of Aryan philology has been the reconstruction of the Old Aryan (or, as M. Pezzi has it, the Proto-Aryan) mother-tongue, from which the so-called Indo-European languages are descended. At least, the comparative researches that have been made have owed their chief interest to their bearing on this problem. In philology, as in zoölogy and botany, questions of classification have become irretrievably implicated with questions of genealogical kinship. Whether we are considering consonants and vowels, or the case-endings of nouns, or the syntax of moods and tenses, it is impossible to describe accurately the relations of the several Aryan languages to one another without involving a perpetual reference to the common original from which these languages sprang. The first noteworthy attempt at reconstructing the mother-tongue was made by Schleicher, who even went so far as to write a story in it by way of illustrating his conclusions. Respecting this bold attempt it has been well observed by Schmidt that, even with regard to those words and forms which can be proved to have existed in Old Aryan, we are unable to ascertain the chronology. Granting that a word A and a word B both existed in Old Aryan, in the times of the *Spracheinheit*, we do not know but A may have become obsolete before B came into general use. So that it is not unlikely that Schleicher, in his story, though each separate word may be correctly reproduced, may nevertheless write an Old Aryan style as anomalous as would be the style of a writer of hypothetical

English, who should mix up in one and the same sentence the diction of Chaucer, of Dryden, and of Longfellow. It is difficult, at present, to see how chronological considerations can be applied to the vocabulary of Old Aryan, in the absence of that kind of historic evidence which written records or inscriptions alone can furnish. And here we see it forcibly illustrated how thoroughly, after all, is comparative philology an *historical* science. Though it can, within a limited range, perform certain wonderful 'feats of inference, quite comparable with such as are achieved by the physical sciences, yet, after all, the tether by which it may stray from its historic base is not a long one. The science of language must still be studied mainly by the help of documentary evidence. For this reason I am quite inclined to sympathize with the feeling which has led the translator, both in the title and in the text, to substitute the old-fashioned word "philology" for the more modern "glottologia" of the original.

This chronological difficulty would seem to render hopeless the accurate restitution of the Old Aryan language *as a whole*. We can none the less, however, restore or reconstruct separate Old Aryan *words* with a fair approach to accuracy; and an extensive vocabulary has already been thus obtained, as witness the three goodly octavos of the third edition of Fick. The wonderful industry and minuteness with which the inquiry has been pursued are well illustrated in M. Pezzi's chapters on sounds, roots, stems, and words; but it is hardly worth while to encumber this brief notice with citations of points of detail which the reader interested in such topics can so readily find in the book itself. As one reads the chapter on sounds, one practical consideration will, I think, at once suggest itself. It is high time that some common method should be devised of designating Old Aryan sounds by Roman letters with diacritical marks. At present no two philologists seem to be able to agree on this practical point. The  $k_1$  of Havet is the  $k^s$  of Ascoli and plain  $k$  of Fick; the  $k_2$  of Havet is the  $k^i$  of Ascoli and  $k_e$  of Fick; and so on, in a most perplexing jumble, which will grow still worse as these studies proceed, unless some common method can be agreed upon.

The most interesting points in the book for the general reader are, no doubt, the discussions of the geographical site of the old home of the Aryans—which the latest researches seem still to leave on Asiatic ground—and of the manner in which the mother-tongue became divided in giving rise to its Indo-European descendants. On

this last question, opinion has shifted variously since Schleicher's primary division into Northern and Southern Aryan, or Litho-Slavo-Teutonic and Kelto-Italo-Græco-Irano-Indic. Fick has maintained, with great ability, that the primary division should be into European on the one hand, and Irano-Indic on the other. Much nearer the truth than either of these, I should think, is Schmidt, who argues that no such divisions and subdivisions can be maintained, but that the mother-tongue, diffused over a vast territory, became differentiated into a swarm of dialects among which local centers of integration became gradually established here and there, thus giving rise to the various Indo-European languages as we know them. This agrees well with what we know to have happened in the development of the modern Romanic languages from the vulgar Latin.

The reader interested in this class of studies will not fail to rejoice in the appearance of a new and thoroughly revised edition of the great work\* in which the lamented Pictet has shown so elaborately how from the reconstructed old Aryan vocabulary we can obtain valid conclusions as to the prehistoric civilization of the Old Aryan people. This work, which began to be published in 1859, is certainly one of the most remarkable books which the nineteenth century has produced. In no other do we get such rich and multifarious illustration of the wonderful services which comparative philology has rendered to our knowledge of the history of mankind. With painstaking elaborateness Pictet shows what minerals and plants, what animals, wild or domesticated, were known to the primitive Aryans, what conceptions they had of the weather and the seasons, how they built and furnished their houses, what tools and weapons they used, what they ate and drank and wherewithal they were clothed, what their notions of property were, and how they made their living, how their family was constructed, and what they thought about the world and the gods. In so vast and comprehensive an inquiry there was room for many mistakes; and the progress of philological studies described by M. Pezzi was beginning to leave Pictet's work somewhat in the rear of the best scholarship of the time, when the author set about making this new edition. While preserving the same general plan as the original work, the new edition has been so thoroughly revised in view of the labors

\* *Les Origines Indo-Européennes, ou les Aryas Primitifs. Essai de Paléontologie Linguistique.* Par Adolphe Pictet. 2e édition revue et augmentée. Paris: Sandoz et Fischbacher, 1878. 3 vols. 8vo.

of contemporary philologists, and especially of Curtius and Fick, as to possess quite a fresh and independent value.

The splendid results obtained by Pictet gain additional interest when confronted with the no less striking conclusions reached by the study of comparative jurisprudence. For the foundations of this noble study we may perhaps look back as far as Grimm's work on the legal antiquities of Germany. But it will be long before the English-speaking world will forget the new era which was opened for many fresh young minds by the publication in 1861 of Sir Henry Maine's most fascinating treatise on "Ancient Law," a work which I well remember devouring at a single sitting with that same kind of breathless interest with which one rushes through novels of adventure like "Ivanhoe" or "The Cloister and the Hearth." A new light seemed to be thrown over the whole course of European history. The influence of this brilliant book on the minds of the present generation has been deservedly great; and the work which it began has been pursued, with varied success, by the author himself in his "Village Communities" and "History of Early Institutions," by Mr. McLennan, in his suggestive though somewhat over-ingenious essay on "Primitive Marriage," by M. Fustel de Coulanges, in his rich and striking treatise on the "Ancient City," and—last, but not least—by our own countryman, Mr. Lewis Morgan, whose noble essay on "Ancient Society," published two years since, heralds a new era in American scholarship. A few more works like that of Mr. Morgan will suffice to place our country in the foremost rank for scholarship, as it is already in the foremost rank politically and commercially. Curiously enough the response to Mr. Morgan—the next great work in this rich and fruitful field of study—comes from an English community still younger than our own, on the opposite side of the globe. Professor Hearn, of the University of Melbourne, Australia, is already well known to scholars through his able works on "Plutology" and the "Government of England." His new work, on "The Aryan Household,"\* applies to the entire Aryan race the method of investigation so thoroughly illustrated by Coulanges with reference to the Græco-Italian communities only. Like Coulanges, he begins with the consideration of ancestor-worship and the common house-ceremonial, and proceeds thence to discuss the household and clan, the systems of archaic kinship, the principle of

\* The Aryan Household: its Structure and its Development. An Introduction to Comparative Jurisprudence. By W. E. Hearn. London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1879. 8vo, pp. 494.

exogamy and the theory of agnation, the distinctions of ranks and the customary laws affecting the position and rights of members of the clan. He traces, with more minuteness than any previous writer, the various stages by which the fusion of contiguous clans gave rise to the state ; and his discussion of the principle of vicinity as a source of rights and obligations seems to me especially fresh and instructive. The questions raised by this great work are too many and too important to admit of discussion in a brief notice like the present. The most we can do is to call the reader's attention to what is, no doubt, the most weighty and valuable book of the present year.

Coming down from these great original works, it is pleasant to have so excellent a popular compendium to notice as Keary's "*Dawn of History*."\* These Old Aryan researches have at last reached that stage where it has become worth while to try to impart some of their results to the general public. Mr. Keary goes over the whole ground—stone, bronze, and iron implements, forms of speech, village communities, ancestor worship, myths of the dawn, picture-writing, etc.—and makes quite an agreeable exposition, which any one who has yet to make a beginning in these studies may read in half a dozen evenings with pleasure and profit.

A work so deservedly well known as Duncker's "*History of Antiquity*" needs no further endorsement than the mere announcement of its title.† It ought to have been translated before ; but, since it was not, we may be thankful that the translation which at last has come is based on a new and thoroughly revised edition, embracing the latest results of Biblical criticism and hieroglyphic and cuneiform interpretation. The work, as far as now translated, comes down to the era of Tiglath-pileser I. of Assyria, in the twelfth century before Christ. It will require two or three volumes more to complete the work.

JOHN FISKE.

\* *The Dawn of History: an Introduction to Prehistoric Study.* Edited by C. F. Keary. New York: Scribner, 1879. 12mo, pp. 240.

† *The History of Antiquity.* From the German of Max Duncker, by Evelyn Abbott. London: R. Bentley & Son, 1877-'79. Vols. I., II. 8vo.